

NEW COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Commercial buildings are a vital part of the Town of Bedford. New commercial buildings must comply with the most current building and applicable codes to ensure a safe and comfortable work environment.

Below is information to help you through the permit approval process.



PERMITS REQUIRED

- **Building Permit**
- **Electrical Permit**
- **Plumbing / Gas Permit**

BEFORE OBTAINING A PERMIT

Reviews and Approvals

- **Zoning Review** is required to determine if the new commercial building complies with the minimum requirements outlined in the Bedford Zoning Bylaw including but not limited to setbacks, lot size, FAR and other criteria . Some commercial uses require a Special Permit or multiple Special Permits from the Zoning Board of Appeals. If action is required by the Zoning Board of Appeals either for Special Use Permits or to seek relief for non-compliance issues then this process must be completed prior to applying for a building permit.
- **Site Plan Approval** is required for most new commercial buildings. This process looks at the whole project including but not limited to, how the building fits on the site, parking layout, parking spaces, site access and landscaping. The applicant would be required to file a scaled site plan/certified plot plan with the **Planning Board** for review. Once the review is completed and their recommendations are forwarded to the Building Official, the Building Official will approve the site plan. This Planning Board review must be completed prior to applying for the building permit.
- **Conservation Review** is required to determine if the new commercial building is within the Conservation Commission's jurisdiction. If it is determined that the new commercial building must go before the Conservation Commission for review and/or

approval then this process must be completed prior to the issuance of the building permit.

- **Historic District Commission Review** is required when the subject property is located within the Historic District and the new commercial building can be seen from a public way. If review/approval is required then this process must be completed prior to the issuance of the building permit.
- **Department of Public Works Review/Sign-off** is required when the new commercial building will be tied into the Town's public sewer system and will be using the Town's water supply. DPW will also look at location of backflow preventers and, with uses that produce grease, type and location of grease traps. ***Prior to submitting your building permit application***, the DPW representative will be required to initial and date the appropriate box located in the upper left-hand side of the front page of the building permit application.
- **Board of Health Review/Sign-off** is required when the new commercial building will include a commercial kitchen or restaurant use or if the use will be handling, storing or processing hazardous waste or petroleum based products or materials. ***Prior to submitting your building permit application***, the Health Inspector will be required to initial and date the appropriate box located in the upper left-hand side of the front page of the building permit application.
- **Fire Department Review/Sign-off** is required to review all life-safety and fire-protection systems required by code such as sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, smoke & heat detectors within the new commercial building. *The Building Official will be responsible for forwarding all pertinent information and plans to the Fire Department.*

OBTAINING A PERMIT

All commercial buildings over **35,000 cubic feet** will be subject to construction control requirements as outlined under [s.116.0](#) of the Massachusetts Building Code, 780 CMR.

Minimum Submission Requirements

- **Building Permit Application** and all supplemental information, including license and insurance information, [construction control affidavits](#) from architect/engineers, [licensed contractor document list](#) sign-off completed in its entirety and signed by the authorized agent (contractor or registered design professional) **and** the owner of the property.
- **Site Plan/Certified Plot Plan** stamped by a registered land surveyor or civil engineer. The site plan/certified plot plan previously reviewed by the Planning Board must be amended to incorporate the Planning Board's recommendations unless otherwise directed by the Building Official. The scaled site plan must show the new commercial building as it relates to all property lines, street lines and other

structures on the property. The site plan will also be required to show parking spaces, vehicle access, any and all easements, covenants, deed restrictions, flood plain deliniations, grade elevations, landscaping, etc.

- **Building Plans** must be submitted in triplicate on a minimum sheet size of 24x36 inches (no pencil) with a minimum scale of 1/4 inch = 1 foot (all dimensions must be shown). The Architect of Record is responsible for ensuring code compliance. He/She will submit a **Code Analysis Report** outlining, among other things, use group(s), type of construction, height and area of the building, travel distances to exit the building, egress components, fire protection requirements, etc.

*****Please be advised that if there are unique circumstances involving any given project or unique framing methods are being used then the Building Official reserves the right to require additional information beyond the minimum requirements to be submitted in order to ensure compliance with the Massachusetts Building Code, 780 CMR and/or any other applicable agency*****

Plans must show the following information:

Foundation Plan/Footing Details (minimum required depth of foundation is 48") showing size, depth, width and height of all footings and foundation walls, re-bar sizes, wall perimeter, etc.

Framing Plan (*bird's-eye view*) showing size, spacing and length of all joists, studs, columns and beams. Type of materials being used to assemble the structure including framing of walls, floors, ceilings and roofs.

Framing Section Details (side view) showing cross-sections of foundation, wall, floor and roof systems, stairways, ceiling heights, seismic bracing details, fire/draft stopping details, fire-rated partitions, etc.

MEP Plans showing HVAC/mechanical systems, electrical systems, fire protection systems, plumbing/gas systems and any other pertinent details governing such systems. ***Please note***, fire protection plans/documents must comply with [s.901.7.1.1](#) of the MA Building Code, up to and including a *Fire Protection Narrative Report* stamped by the appropriate registered design professional.

Attachment Details such as attachment to foundation, column to beam connections, joist to beam connection, etc.

Floor Plan/Details showing layout of each floor area including walls, doors, stairways, windows and rooms. Each room/space will be clearly marked as to its proposed use (i.e. office, conference room, bathroom, storage, shipping, etc.) and show sufficient details to ensure compliance with the [Architectural Access Board Regulations, 521 CMR](#) and other applicable codes.

Energy/Insulation Details showing compliance with the most recent energy code requirements. Information to include but not limited to, R-value of all insulation material, U-factor for all glazing/windows, building envelope criteria,

mechanical/HVAC system design criteria, duct and pipe insulation, power and lighting fixture schedule, etc. The [COMcheck](#) software program may be able to assist you in achieving code compliance.

Elevation Drawings showing height of structure, grade elevations, ramps, stairs and all window and door openings, etc. Interior elevations should show heights of counters, light switches, water bubblers, dispensing units, fire alarm pull stations, grab bars, etc. to ensure compliance with the Architectural Access Board Regulations, 521 CMR and other applicable codes.

*****IMPORTANT NOTE*** Prefabricated/Manufactured Buildings** will be required to comply with the *Manufactured Buildings* provisions outlined in Appendices 120.L of the MA building code, 780 CMR.

The submitted information is reviewed by the Building Official. While some commercial projects may be more complex than others, typically the plan review for a new commercial building is 21 to 30 days. If clarification or more information is needed then the Building Official will contact the licensed contractor or homeowner (if they are securing the permit) which may prolong the issuance of the permit.

A building permit for a new commercial building is issued in a two-phase process. Once the initial plan review is complete, the Building Official will issue a *Foundation Permit*. This will allow the contractor to install the foundation **only**. During the installation of the foundation required inspections will be made by the Building Official to ensure code compliance. Once the foundation is installed the contractor will be required to submit a certified *as-built* plot plan showing the exact location of the foundation as it relates to the lot's property lines, easements, etc. This allows the Building Official to verify that the foundation has been installed in accordance with the approved site plan and that it complies with the minimum zoning setback requirements and any other conditions that may apply.

******IMPORTANT NOTE:** If the foundation was inadvertently located so as not to comply with the approved site plan or minimum setback requirements or violates any other conditions that may apply then the *Building Permit* to build the structure **will not be issued**. The contractor/developer will be required to correct the issue which may include removing a portion of the foundation or seeking relief through the Zoning Board of Appeals process. If additional conditions were required by other department and/or commissions (i.e. Conservation, Historic District, Planning Board, etc.) then you will be required to appear before the respective department/commission to seek relief. Once **all issues have been resolved**, the Building Official will release the Building Permit to allow construction of the dwelling.****

When the *foundation* permit is ready, the licensed contractor will be contacted by our staff to notify them that the permit is ready to be picked up and the permit fee amount required to release the permit. When the certified as-built plot plan has been submitted **and** approved by the Building Official then the *building* permit will be released.